

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE# 2009-0032

BAR Meeting
March 25, 2009

ISSUE: Alterations
APPLICANT: Brenda and Brian Maday
LOCATION: 403 North Fayette Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral for further study with the following consideration:

That the Applicant utilize the 1961 construction drawings as a basis for their revised design and install a molded metal cornice rather than the wood cornice as proposed, and that the Applicant consider installation of wood, two-paneled, louvered shutters flanking each of the four front windows as shown on the 1961 plans. The shutters must be sized to correspond to the width of the window openings, and be installed by utilizing screws which penetrate into the brick's mortar, thus not to damage the exterior brick surface.

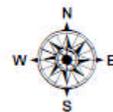
****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



BAR CASE #2009-0033

3/25/2009



I. ISSUE:

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a painted, wood, pedimented door surround and a wood cornice on the front elevation of the townhouse located at 403 North Fayette Street.

II. HISTORY:

The three, attached, two-story, brick houses at 401, 403 and 405 North Fayette Street were constructed circa 1961 by F. H. Broyhill Construction Co. Inc. The plans for the houses show a higher level of architectural detailing than was apparently constructed. The center unit, 403 North Fayette Street, was to have had a higher roofline. All three units were to have 6/6 double-hung windows, two-paneled, louvered shutters and molded metal cornices at the roof line. As built, the houses are largely devoid of any of these architectural embellishments. Today, most of the windows in the three houses appear to have horizontally aligned two-over-two wood sash with aluminum storm windows, flat metal cornices, and no surrounds or shutters detailing the fenestrations.

Prior Approvals:

In March of 2005, the BAR approved window replacement on the subject home with one-over-one wood windows.

III. ANALYSIS:

The addition of architectural details onto buildings within historic districts is to be evaluated with strict scrutiny, so a false historical appearance is not created. If there is adequate pictorial, physical or historical documentation so that an architectural detail may be accurately fabricated and it is established that it is desirable to introduce or re-introduce this feature as part of a building's historical significance, then designing and installing this element may be appropriate.

The subject proposal is requesting the installation of a wood pedimented portico, and wood molded cornice onto this early 1960s brick townhouse. The Applicant has provided the Board with the original 1961 construction drawings (see Figure 4), which illustrate some of the as-built details including the absence of ornamentation around the entry, and the existing fenestration alignment. The drawings also indicate the intent of the architect for these units to also have a molded metal cornice and 6/6 double-hung windows flanked with two-paneled louvered shutters, even though these elements were never installed.

The *Design Guidelines* describe “prominent visual details of the main façade of the building” as “important visual elements”, and that “care should be taken that [these] character-defining features are maintained.” The *Guidelines* further explain that “inappropriate decorative elements detract from the architectural integrity of a structure”, and “surrounding [door] details should be appropriate to the period of the structure.” (*Design Guidelines*, Doors - Page 1 & 2).

Staff recommends that the application be deferred for restudy, as the Applicant's request for a pedimented entry is a high-style, conjectural feature that is not original to the building. The addition of this element would be creating a false sense of historical development and would negatively impact the architectural integrity of this mid-twentieth century building. Staff recommends that the Applicant install a molded metal cornice as identified in the original 1961 construction drawings rather than the wood cornice proposed. Staff also suggests that the Applicant may consider installing fixed, two-paneled, louvered shutters on the front elevation, as identified in the original 1961 construction drawings. It should be noted that, while the design guidelines strongly discourage decorative wood shutters that are not operable, due to the age of the townhouse and the fact that decorative wood shutters were shown on the 1961 plans for the building, in this case non-operable wood shutters would be appropriate and as such any proposed shutter installed on this building should be affixed to the elevation through the use of screws into the brick's mortar joints.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral for further study with the following consideration:

That the Applicant utilize the 1961 construction drawings as a basis for their revised design and install a molded metal cornice rather than the wood cornice as proposed, and that the Applicant consider installation of wood, two-paneled, louvered shutters flanking each of the four front windows as shown on the 1961 plans. The shutters must be sized to correspond to the width of the window openings, and be installed by utilizing screws which penetrate into the brick's mortar, thus not to damage the exterior brick surface.

V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Office of Historic Alexandria:

R Approve.

VI. IMAGES:



Figure 1: View of Subject Townhouse's Front Elevation

403 North Fayette Street



Figure 2: View of Townhouse Stick



Figure 3: Detail of Existing Flat Metal Cornice

VII. DRAWINGS / PROPOSAL:

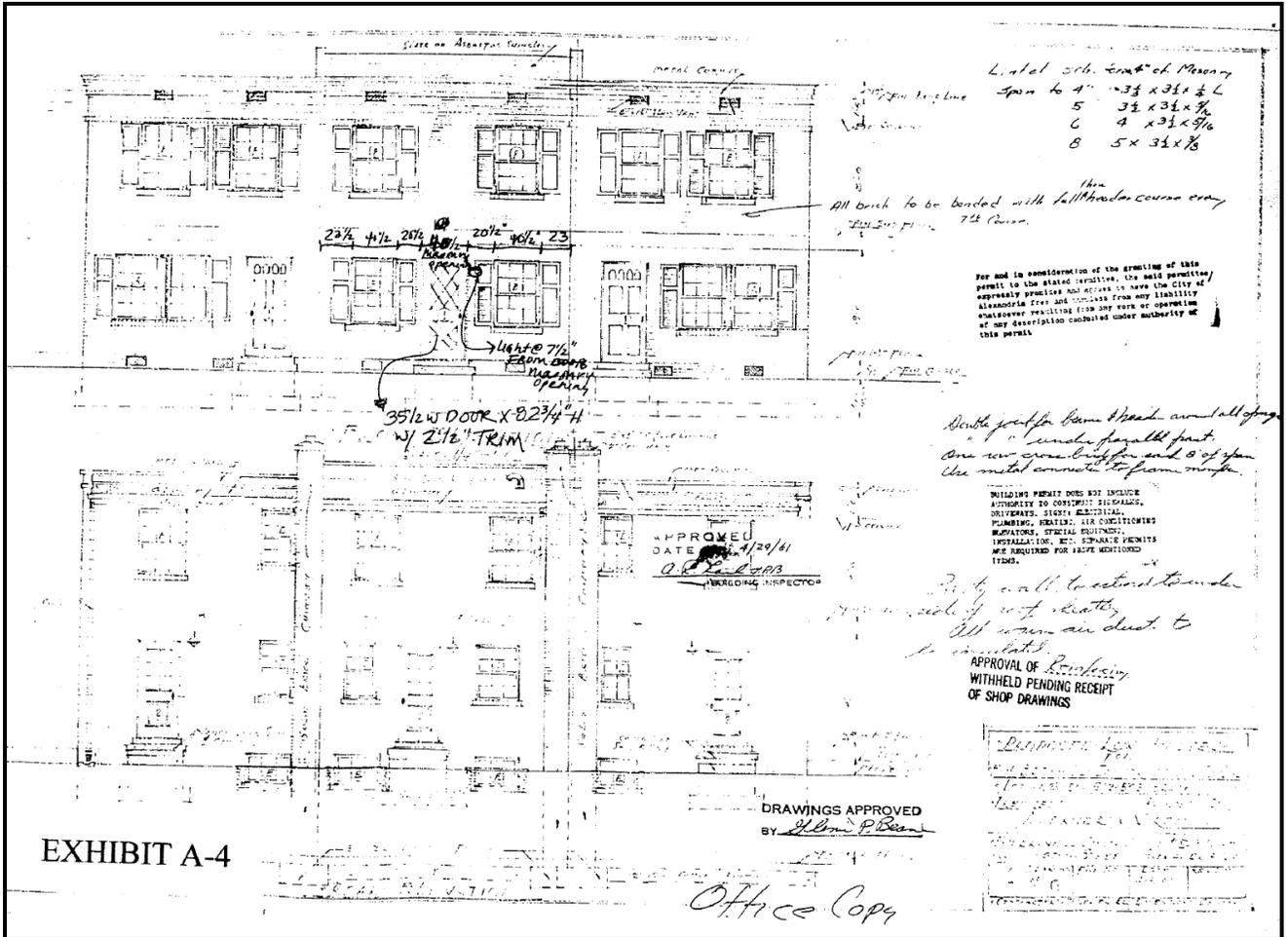


Figure 4: 1961 Construction Drawings

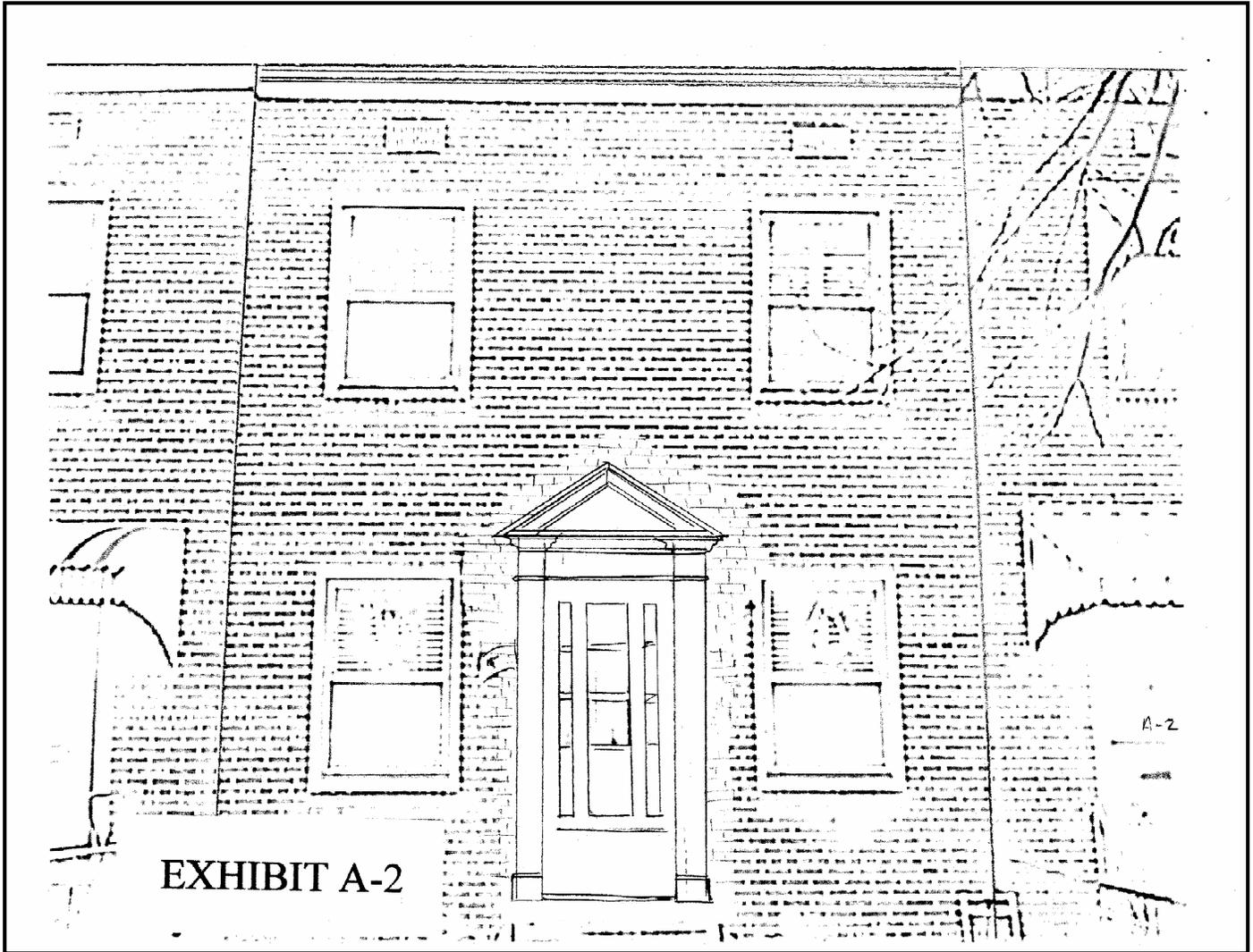


Figure 5: Proposal

VIII: APPLICANT'S ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBITS:



